AN ASSUMED HISTORICAL BASIS OF THE SIEGFRIED-LEGEND

BY

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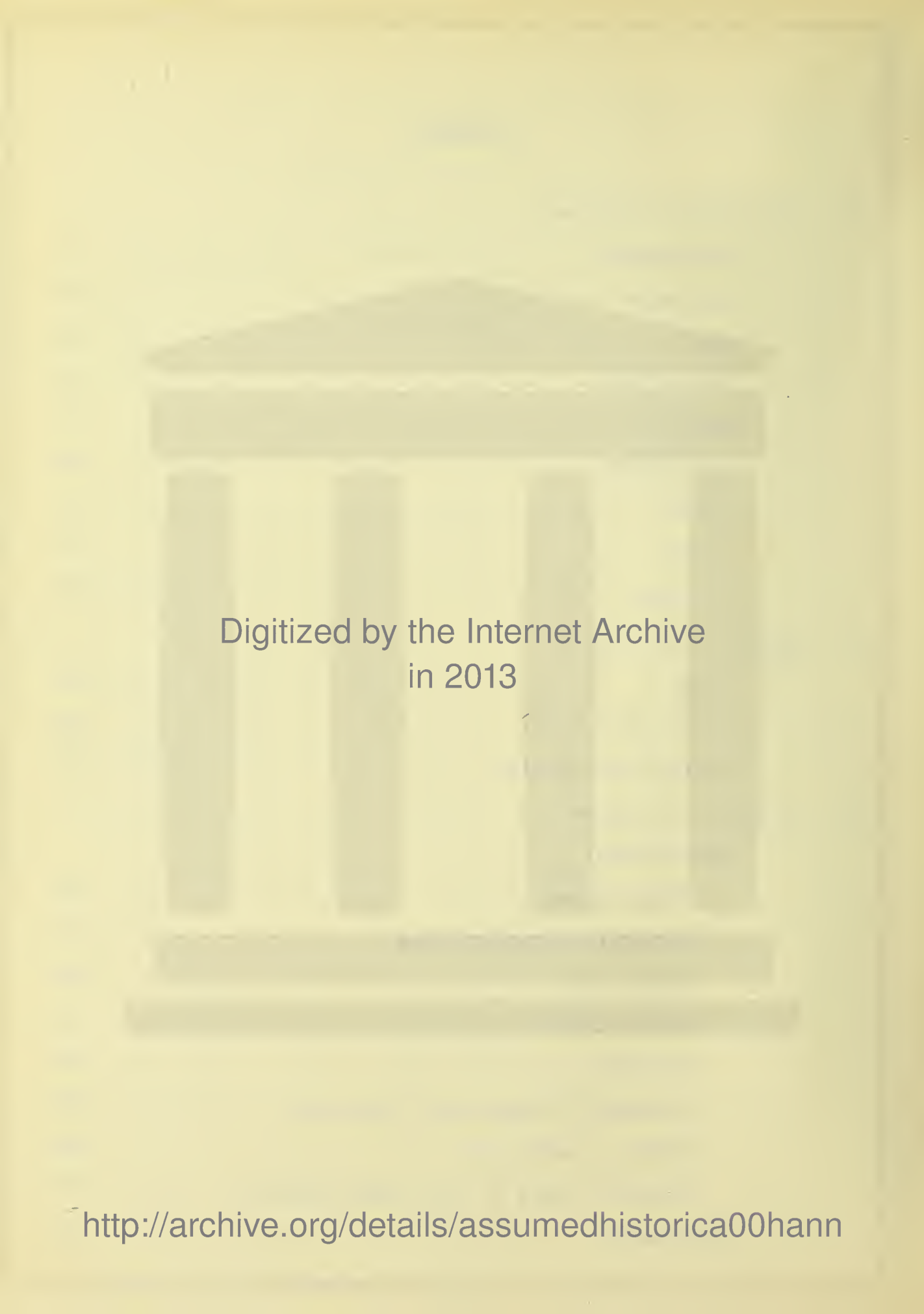

I

Is Siegfried Arminius?

Every nation loves to extol the deeds of its great heroes. Even in prehistoric times, the age of unwritten history, the barbarian peoples of Europe were celebrating the brave exploits of their leaders in songs and legends which were transmitted from one generation to another through many centuries. This is eminently true of the Germanic tribes. Since there was no written literature in Germany previous to the age of Charles the Great, the memory of its national heroes was perpetuated from the days of its early history by the epic lays of wandering minstrels.

It is true that sufficient evidence cannot be furnished to prove that all these legendary characters were real men, yet it is an assured fact that many of them were. Even before the existence of any Germanic historian, contemporary writers belonging to adjacent nations have had occasion to mention some of the great men of the Germanic peoples; Tacitus, Vellejus, Dio, Strabo, Ammianus, and Priscus are valuable sources of this kind. Among the earliest German authorities are Jordanes, the E. Goth (ca.550), Paulus Diaconus, the Lombard (ca. 770), Widukind, the Saxon (ca. 967), the Quedlinburg Annals (ca. 1000), and Eckehard (1100). Other important writers are Gregory of Tours (ca. 580) and Eginhard (ca. 800). Old English Chronicles containing genealogical tables of the royal families with their legendary names affixed

are found exceedingly important as source material. In such historical writings we find mentioned the names of Alboin, King of the Lombards, who appears in the Saxon poem Widsith; Ermanaric and Attila, of the Eddic Lays; Theodorich, the central figure in the popular German literature of the entire middle ages, also Odoacer, his adversary; Widigoia, the W. Goth; Offa, king of the Angles; Gundahari, the Burgundian king, etc.

We must admit, that where opportunity is offered to compare legend with authentic history, little more of fact remains in the former than names of characters and of places—and these often altered—together with the barest outline of the original incident; perhaps only one single outstanding feature of the same is preserved. This is, however, only the natural result of the conditions under which this form of literature developed. The saga was not a fixed quantity—it grew along with the people. The wandering singers, the real transmitters of epic tradition, found it necessary to clothe their narration in a form which should appeal to their hearers. Thus it was that the saga, kept constantly before the people, became a sort of reflection of their national spirit and ideals; as it passed from age to age, from race to race, its heroes became no less heroic, no less noble, yet the manner in which they gave expression to their heroism would vary to suit the changed conditions. So, taking everything into account, we feel justified in believing that all saga contains at least a kernel of truth, however much it may have become obscured through the accumulation of unhistorical material. This observation of the interplay of

legend and history has given rise to a problem which has been engaging the attention of scholars at different times through the last century.

There is no Germanic land in which the Siegfried-legend is not a favorite: in the Scandanavian Edda, and in both German epics, the Seifridlied and the Nibelungenlied, Siegfried stands everywhere in the foreground; even in Beowulf, the Anglo-Saxon poem, our hero is not forgotten. In the Wilkina Saga we are told of Siegfried: "Er[1] ragte vor allen Männern an Hochfahrt und Adlichkeit und aller Hübschheit, beinahe in allen alten Sagen, wo von den stärksten und berühmtesten, und den mildesten Helden und Fürsten erzählt wird; und sein Name geht in allen Zungen vom Norden bis ans griechische Meer, und so wird er währen, so lange die Welt steht." Yet, strange to say, search the pages of history as we may, the name of Siegfried does not appear.

On the other hand, the four chief classic historians, who touch upon early German history, Tacitus, Vellejus, Dio, and Strabo, have considerable to say about a man named Arminius, of the tribe of the Cheruscans, who through his heroism and skill succeeded in turning back forever the tide of Roman conquest that was threatening to sweep over all Germany and reduce its inhabitants to a condition of servitude. Tacitus says of him: "Liberator[2] haud dubie Germaniae et qui non primordia populi Romani,

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1. Heldensagen, v. der Hagen, Chap. 166.

2. Tacitus, Annals, Vol. I, Bk. II, Chap. 88.

sed florentissimum imperium lacessierit,proeliis ambiguus, bello non victus. Septem et triginta annos vitae, duodecim potentiae explevit, caniturque adhuc barbaras apud gentes." Surely such a king of heroes as Arminius, the liberator of Germany, would occupy a prominent place in the national saga. Incredible as it may seem, however, the memory of Arminius and his noble deeds seems unknown to German legend.

Here we have a peculiar situation: is it possible that all the Germanic peoples have through many centuries been singing the praises of a purely mythical hero, and have at the same time been entirely forgetting the one real hero to whom Germany owes the preservation of the very beginning of her national life?

One of the first to bring this matter to the attention of the public was Adolph Giesebrecht, who in 1837 wrote an essay entitled, "Über[1] den Ursprung der Siegfriedssaga." In this paper he begins by rejecting the myth theory as applied to the Nibelungensaga, and assumes that the saga in general is the outcome of certain ethical, fundamental ideas, awakened in the consciousness of the people by certain great events which strongly affected the national life. These moral views were strengthened at different times through similar causes, until the moral consciousness of the people, now fully alert, came to interpret new events in the light of the older ones. Thus, as history repeated itself from generation to generation, or from age to age, the

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1. Neues Jahrbuch der Berlinischen Gesellschaft f. d. Sprache u. Alterthumskunde. pp. 203-234.

saga kept pace with the tribal life: National characters or events, finding their counterparts in the saga, blended with them into one, bringing new characteristics and experiences to the individual, and new features to the situation.

With this theory in mind, the author begins to search backward through history from the estimated time of the Siegfried-legend, looking for a situation which seems to contain all the essential features of the story. This he finds in the history of the Frankish king, Siegbert,who is treacherously slain by those from whom he could have expected love; in Brunhild, who is left with her little son in hostile surroundings; finally, in the quarrel of women as the source of severe crime, seen in the hostile relations of Brunhild and her sister-in-law Fredegund. Yet if the saga had been based on these elements, it would probably have taken a somewhat different form; for Siegbert was killed in open war against his murderers, the historical Brunhild possessed little of the magic art or gigantic strength imputed to the Brunhilde of the northern saga, also her relation to Siegbert is different from that of the legendary Brunhild to Siegfried.

In a similar manner, Giesebrecht leads us back, farther and farther into history, finding here and there a character or combination of characters which may have made their contribution to the saga, until he reaches the time of Arminius, the Cheruscan. In him he believes to find a historical figure who may well have been the original character in whom the Siegfried

of saga had his beginning. To analyze this composite, legendary Siegfried, to separate him into his original elements, and from these to reconstruct his historical counterpart, proved to be a most difficult task—indeed, one which offered insurmountable obstacles; yet sufficiently satisfactory results were reached, to justify the investigator, as he believed, in asserting that he had reached a solution of the problem.

In the slaying of the dragon, Siegfried's greatest exploit, he thinks to see a fanciful representation of the deed which made Arminius famous, viz. the annihilation of the Roman army in the 'Varusschlacht.' In support of this theory, which seems at first sight rather improbable, Giesebrecht reasons thus: "Schon[1] sehr früh scheint allerdings die Darstellung der gröszesten Tat Siegfrieds als Erlegung eines Drachen bekannt gewesen zu sein, wofür das bekannte Bild Siegberts in der Medarduskirche zu Soissons zeugt, so wie das Vorhandensein dieser Auffassung in den Eddaliedern beweist, dasz schon in dieser Form die Saga in den Norden übertragen ward. Eben dies ist der Fall mit Siegfrieds Hornhaut, während die Sage, dasz er die Sprache der Vögel verstanden, der nordischen Auffassung eigen ist, und hiedurch wie durch den Parallelismus, in welchen diese Erhöhung seiner geistigen Natur zu der Unverwundbarkeit, als einer Steigerung der Körperlichkeit, tritt, einen jüngeren Ursprung vermuthen läszt. Die von diesen drei Stücken zu gebende historische

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1. Neues Jahrbuch des Berlinischen Gesellschaft, 1837, pp. 225-6.

Deutung wird nur denen sich empfehlen können, welchen der Grundsatz zusagt: es sei der Sage, welche aus einer Zeit dominirenden Naturlebens stamme, und in dem Augenblick verstumme, wo das Bewusztsein politischer Verhältnisse über jenes die Oberhand gewonnen, natürlich, statt des geschichtlichen Stoffes, wenn dieser sich aufdrängt, Naturgegenstände dichtend unterzuschieben, und jene unter der Form dieser aufzufassen und darzustellen. Wenn es daher dem Dichter auch eines Entwickelten Zeitalters gerade nicht verargt werden wird, dasz er, mit bewuszter Freiheit, das besiegte feindliche Heer als ein erlegtes Ungeheuer darstellt,— so hat diese Umgestaltung eine weit gröszere Bedeutung und eine tiefere Notwendigkeit in einer Zeit, wo der Mensch durch das Fremde noch nicht berührt oder zu Reflexion veranlaszt, in der Anschauung lebt. Einer solchen Zeit mochte sich mit Notwendigkeit für den Anblick des auf engen Waldwegen durch die Schluchten einer Gebirgsgegend sich windenden Heeres gepanzerter und fremdredender Menschen die Vorstellung eines Drachen unterschieben; ein Eindruck, der auf heutigem Bildungsstandpunkte sich in ein hingeworfenes Wort entladen haben möchte, während er bei einem aus der Herrschaft der Naturanschauung nicht oder kaum hinausgegangenen Volke bleibende Form für die Auffassung der Begebenheit ward." In like manner, continues the writer, Siegfried's horny hide might have been taken with historical meaning, viz. to represent the coat of mail worn by Arminius, who, having served in the Roman army for a long time, was probably the first of his tribe to have such a strong covering for his body; Siegfried's ability

to understand the speech of the birds might be only a fanciful way of expressing the fact that Arminius understood the language of the Romans, perhaps a rare accomplishment among the people of his tribe.

To those who may object to an attempt to derive historical meaning from the northern saga, since it represents the Volsung family, to which Siegfried (Sigurd) belongs, as having descended from Odin, and therefore raises it out of the realm of history, the author makes answer, that the nearer the events of saga lie to the time when the emigration of the Asen was supposed to take place, the more necessarily are they connected with them, for the races of heroes were supposed to be related to the gods; he also cites the fact that Hengist and Horsa are, as is well known, descendants of Odin, only four generations removed from him, yet no one will doubt whether they are to be considered historical personages of the fifth century.

Furthermore, the fact that in the family connection of both Siegfried and Arminius a striking similarity in the form of names is to be observed, most of them being characterized by the initial syllable "Sig-" or "Seg-," leads to the conclusion that saga has preserved for us the true name of our hero, and that the peculiar name given to him in history might have been simply an official one or even a religious epithet.

In the closing words of this paper we get a brief, but vivid picture of the method by which the saga, originating perhaps in the very Songs of Arminius referred to by Tacitus, and

passing through the tumultuous experiences of the 'Völkerwanderung,' gradually grew until it reached its present form: partaking more essentially of the nature of a family saga in the beginning, it took on, little by little, the form of a tribal one; the legend of the hoard, found indigenous in Gaul in the time of Chlodwig, was incorporated into the story; also in Chrotild was found a wife who took up the unfinished history of Thusnelda and conducted it to a brilliant end, at the same time bringing in the memory of an earlier event,—the destruction of the Bergundians in Attila's time. When and how Hagen is added is uncertain, but it may have been in connection with the death of Siegbert. In Siegbert himself, the old tribal hero seems almost to have come to life again; and since his wife, the West-Gothic Brunhild, does not, in her true relation to him, continue to find a place in the saga, she blends into one with her enemy Fredegund and disappears. Before she vanishes, however, her quarrel with Fredegund provides the material for one of the outstanding features of this saga, viz. the quarrels of sisters-in-law. With the decline of the Frankish tribe from the time of Siegbert, no events of great moment occurred to give a fresh impulse to the saga, hence its development may be said to have practically ceased at this point. Thus, says Giesebrecht: "So[1] ging die Sage neben dem Leben her, und wenn dieses auf die immer zusammengesetztere Gestaltung der ersteren wirkte, so mag auch sie wiederum nicht ohne bestimmenden Einfluss auf jenes geblieben sein. Nicht als ein zufälligrs Conglomerat

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1. Neues Jahrbuch der Berlinischen Gesellschaft, 1837, p. 231.

geschichtlicher Tatsache also, statt deren auch eben so gut andere sich dem Kerne hätten anbilden können, sondern als die Hauptmomente der Geschichte des fränkischen Königshauses und Volkes bis zu einer ganz historischen Zeit hin, namentlich bis zum Aufkommen der Ahnen Karls des Grossen, organisch vereinigend, erscheint uns die Siegfriedsage."

We are informed by H. Jellinghaus[1] that since the Grimm Bros. would not accept Giesebrecht's theory, his paper was not seriously considered by the public in general.

After the lapse of many years, another Germanic scholar, Gudbrand Vigfusson, the learned Icelander, who was then residing in England, again took up the long-forgotten theme of Siegfried-Arminius,[2] without knowing that any one else had written fully on the subject. While he agrees with Giesebrecht in some respects, his manner of dealing with the matter is quite the opposite: Giesebrecht treats the whole question as a unit, making it his care, not only to find parallel situations in saga and history, but to fit them together logically, so that they shall form a complete whole. Vigfusson is, however, more concerned with details: he selects here and there the particular phases or situations which appeal to him as offering opportunities for comparison, satisfied to deduce his final conclusions from these in disconnected form. Except in the comparison of personal names, and death through the

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1. Arminius u. Siegfried, 1891, p. 8.

2. Grimm Centenary, 1885-6, pp. 1-21.

treachery of kinsmen, Vigfusson's field of research covers practically new territory not touched upon by his predecessor.

The question of names—personal, clan, and tribal—is entered into quite fully. The author thinks it entirely within the range of probability that one who had served in the Roman army for a long time, perhaps ten years, as Arminius did, should be given a Roman name and be designated only by that in the Roman annals, while in his own home country and in its legends he should bear only the name of his boyhood. In this connection an interesting pedigree of the royal house of the Cheruscans is appended, which shows how often the initial syllable Segi- and Segis-, or Seges- appears. Thus, following the law of Germanic nomenclature, Arminius' name would have to be a compound of Segi- (since his father's name was Segimund), and might have been 'Segifredus."

A clan-name for Arminius is constructed after the manner of names found in Scandanavian literature meaning 'King:' for instance, there was an English royal family of Eadlinge, a Frankish one of Heldinge, a Swedish one of Schilbinge, and a Gothic one of Brandinge; operating by the same law which seems to govern the formation of these, the name'Sigelinde' is evolved for the royal Cheruscan family.

In 'Hunsci', a peculiar epithet applied to Siegfried in the Eddic Lays, Vigfusson thinks to have discovered a tribal title of Arminius, i.e., a corrupt form of 'Heorsci' (Cheruscus).

As to the name of Arminius' wife, he agrees only partly with Dr. Kramer's deciphering of the word which is found in an uncial MS. of Strabo in an almost illegible condition: 'Thousn-' he considers an impossible form, but sees in the latter part, -'elda,' a possible Romanization of -'hilda,' which would exactly correspond to 'Grimhild,' the wife of Siegfried. That the Northern Lays have not kept this name is thought to be due to the fact that the Ermanaric cycle by which Swanhild's mother becomes identified with Siegfried's wife, has been confused with the Siegfried cycle.

Through a minute comparison of the data respecting Arminius, as given by the Roman historians, with what is told of Siegfried in the Eddic Lays (the oldest form of Germanic traditional history), the author makes some interesting discoveries and deduces from them a body of conclusions which he considers sufficiently convincing to justify him in asserting that Siegfried is Arminius:-

a. That Siegfried was probably posthumous seems to be indicated by the term 'unborn' which is used with reference to him in some of the older Eddic Lays; that Arminius did not know his father either, seems probable for several reasons: (1) His father, Segimer, is mentioned only in connection with the family pedigree, (2) Arminius speaks only of their mother in his conversation with his brother Flavus across the Weser, (3) he would scarcely have entered military service among the Romans when a mere boy, as it is supposed he did, if his father had

been alive.

b. That the above-mentioned interview of Arminius with Flavus, so graphically described by Tacitus, may have found its source material in some Germanic lay, seems not unlikely, so strikingly does it coincide in both form and spirit with the 'flytings' of the Eddic Lays, or with the account of the quarrel between Brunhild and Gudrun.

c. Both heroes resort to force, in order to obtain their brides, and these exploits are evidently the beginning of a chain of influences which finally culminate in death for both men.

d. That Siegfried and Arminius resemble each other in personal appearance and traits of character, is considered interesting, but of minor importance—a fact whose worth is chiefly in helping to swell the body of cumulative testimony.

e. Immunity from poison—a characteristic of the Volsung family—is not entirely without its counterpart in history: Tacitus tells of a conspiracy to poison Arminius, of the proposition made to the Roman senate, and of its scornful rejection by Tiberius.

f. A possible reference to the trouble between Arminius and his relatives may be found in the Lost Lays from the Volsunga Paraphrase, where mention is made of the wars of the Volsungs with Sigi-geir and Sigi-here.

g. In the Edda we are told, "There fell Siegfried and his <u>three-year-old son</u>, named Sigmund, whom they slew." On the

day of Germanicus' Triumph, according to Strabo, the son of Arminius was three years of age.

h. The Lamentation Lays may possibly be the outcome of the Triumph of Germanicus: according to Strabo, in the procession was a "car of humiliation" in which captive ladies sat together. The sight of them might well have inspired the writing of such poems as are included in this peculiar group of Lays.

Rudolph Much,[1] of Vienna, wrote in 1890 an interesting article on 'Die Sippe des Arminius.'

He discusses quite fully the circumstances mentioned by Tacitus of the offer made by Gandestrius, the Chatten prince, to the Roman senate, to poison Arminius, if they would furnish the drug. It is his opinion that this letter, supposed to have been written by Gandestrius was a forgery, (1) because the Germans did not lack poison, (2) because any one planning an assassination would do so with the greatest secrecy. Yet he must have been hostile to Arminius, or the belief concerning the genuineness of the letter would scarcely have gained credence. Arminius fell that same year through the malice of his relatives. As to the possible instigator of the evil plot, Much mentions his uncle Inguiomer, his father-in-law Segestes, and his brother Flavus, all of whom were opposed to him. But since Flavus was the son-in-law of Gandestrius who may have had a share in the murder, it is very likely that the adherents of Flavus, who was a Roman, were

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1. Haupt-Zeitschrift f. d. Altertum, V. 35, pp. 361-71.

concerned with it, and that even the Romans themselves might not have been entirely innocent.

The discussion of Thusnelda's name, as it was given in this paper, will be replaced by a later theory[1] of his, published in 1912. The first part of the name 'Thusn-' he believes to be derived from O.N. *þausn, þausk, Þyss* 'Getümmel' or *þeysa, þysia,* Vorwärtsstürmen; the latter part is probably of German origin. He explains the absence of the 'h' by saying that in the Greek (the language of Strabo) this letter must not be used at the beginning of the second part.

For the name of Thumelicus, the son of Arminius, the following explanation is offered: 'Thume-' is probably related to **þūmaz,* 'strong;' the latter part '-licus' may come from got 'leik' 'body.'

Concerning Arminius' name, Much chooses to believe, in opposition to Hübner, that it is of Roman origin, and was bestowed upon him at the same time as the title 'eques Romanus.' He argues that it did not need to be German, since it was not the family name. It is his opinion that Arminius' family name should contain 'Segi-' as the first component part, since his father's name was Segimer. This leads the way to the concession that he might possibly be identified with Siegfried of the Nibelungenlied; that the connection of a historical character with the myth of a god, because of some common similarities, would naturally cause the historical background to become more and

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1. Anzeiger f. d. Altertum, 36, 305.

more obscure. He gives as his final opinion that the memory of Arminius still lives on in a saga of essentially mythical content, as that of a hero in whom Germans and northern peoples still recognized the prototype, Arminius.

In 1891, H. Jellinghaus,[1] who was acquainted with the theories which had previously been advanced on this question, again took up the subject. Placing, as did his predecessors, Roman history and German saga side by side, he discovers still other interesting points of contact. His conclusions are based largely upon a comparison of names and places.

The first task which he sets for himself is to locate the place from which the Siegfriedsaga sprang and then identify it, if possible, with Arminius' home. He assumes that with the old Germans the leadership of a people virtually belonged to a descendant of the progenitor of the tribe, who first settled in their land. In a northern poem dealing with Siegfried's ancestry, Sige, Odin's son, flees on account of a murder, and is given the kingdom of 'Frankenland' by his father. This name, he tells us, as used in the northern saga, often included 'Sachsenland.' Sige's son Rerir is the father of Volsung, from whom Siegfried descends. Strangely enough, their country is called 'Hunaland,' and their kings, including Siegfried, 'hunische Könige.' According to the Saxon Dietrichsaga this 'Hunaland' can be no other than the Westfalen of to-day, and the land of the Cheruscans in

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1. Arminius und Siegfried, 1891.

Arminius' time. It is the opinion of our author that the introduction of the historical Huns into the later German saga is directly due to a misconception of the meaning of the word 'hunisch' as used in the Eddic Lays. As to its origin and meaning, he does not offer the slightest suggestion.

In treating of Siegfried's youth, Jellinghaus uses the Edda as his legendary source. This represents him as posthumous, brought up at the court of his step-father. Wishing to be independent, he leaves home and enters the service of Wieland, the smith, whom all the smith legends designate as a Saxon. In the northern Dietrichsaga the smith is named Mimir. Taking into consideration all the names of places mentioned, also the fact that Westfalen is the home of the smithsaga as well as the region in which the best iron ore is found, the writer feels justified in asserting that Siegfried grew up in his native land. On the other hand, he claims that, while contemporaneous history says practically nothing of Arminius' youth, there is nothing to substantiate the statement usually made in modern histories that he was brought up in the Roman army; much more probable is it that his first sight of the Romans was at the time of Drusus' expedition to the Weser. By the time of Tiberius' visit to Germany, when he held a friendly meeting with the princes of the Cheruscans, Arminius had become a young man; evidently the fair words of the Romans did not deceive him. Suspecting that they were plotting against the liberty of his country he, together with a number of his faithful followers, attached himself to the Roman

army and became proficient in the arts of war. At this time, too, he may have been given his Roman name. Since Vetera, which is not far from the Xanten of to-day, was a Roman stronghold and the central point for all their military operations in northern Germany, the question is raised—granting that Arminius is Siegfried—whether this fact may not have given origin to the belief, as set forth in the Nibelungenlied, that Siegfried grew up in Xanten.

The battle of the Cheruscans with the three Roman legions under Varus is dwelt upon at some length: it is reasoned, that since this victory marks the high point in Arminius' public activity, i.e., it is his master exploit, we must find it symbolized in Siegfried's fight with the dragon. Resorting to the northern Siegfriedsaga, which descends from the Saxon saga, the writer believes to have found there sufficient evidence to warrant the statement that Siegfried's valorous deed is represented as having taken place in the same locality as that of the 'Varusschlacht,' viz. in the region between Detmold and Altenbeken. This idea he finds confirmed by the Icelandic Bishop Niklaus who, about 1150, on a pilgrimage to Rome, passed through this same vicinity and made especial mention of the 'Gnitaheide,' the place where Sigurd slew Fafnir, as being situated in the Lippe-Detmold country.

In order to carry out the comparison, so we are told, the dragon must represent the Roman army. In this connection our attention is called to the fact that the original human nature of the dragon is to be plainly recognized in the northern saga.

To carry the comparison so far, however, as to try to establish a relation between the burning of the dragon and the fact that Varus' body was partly burned, seems, in our opinion, to stop little short of the ridiculous, and really serves to weaken the force of the comparison.

Another doubtful comparison is sought in the situation of the two heroes after the accomplishment of their great deeds: Siegfried, who in the Dietrichsaga betakes himself to Brunhild after he has slain the dragon, meets, in his relation to her, the beginning of a baleful influence which leads to his death; Arminius, through his ambition for the kingship of his people, created for himself, after the Varus battle, a situation which ended fatally.

Concerning the statement made by both Tacitus and Strabo that Arminius' wife and little son were in the great triumphal procession of Germanicus, Jellinghaus is extremely doubtful; he does not, however, discard the idea that such a son existed. On the contrary, he is inclined to think that the mention made in the Edda of Siegmund, Sigurd's three-year-old son, is probably based upon historical tradition, since there was a real connection between history and legend in the middle ages.

The character of Brunhild, her mysterious relation to Siegfried, and her relentless revenge, is found to be a difficult problem, when it comes to recognizing her counterpart in history. Yet an attempt is made to fit her into the Arminius story as an

allegorical figure representing the fatherland: Arminius awakens the slumbering people, dedicates himself to the cause of his country, but after he has slain the Romans (Fafnir) and taken their treasure, he marries a king's daughter, i.e., tries to take the royal crown. As soon as his people (Brunhild) perceive his disloyalty, they turn against him and plot against his life.

The hoard which Siegfried wins from Fafuir is believed by the author to possess a deep significance; in most of the sagas it consists of gold and precious stones, but in Beowulf, which evidently borrows its dragon story from the Siegfriedsaga, it consists of coats of mail, helmets, bracelets, swords, vessels, etc. The Dietrichsage leaves the treasure finally in Siegfried's cellar, the key of which, according to a Swedish saga, lies buried under a rose-bush. This suggests the thousand-year-old rose-bush of Hildesheim, especially since the silver treasure which was found near Hildesheim in 1868 is thought to be a part of the booty taken during the wars with the Romans. That Jellinghaus does not carry the matter further and claim that this silver is a part of Siegfried-Arminius' treasure, is rather surprising. He lays more stress upon another treasure found by Charles the Great which was said to have belonged to King Hercules. He claims that the divine Irmin is accustomed to be translated by 'Herkules,' and that to those who understood Latin and were acquainted with Tacitus, there was a close connection between the mythological Irmin and the historical 'Armin.'

That Etzel, or Atli, as he is called in the Saxon and northern saga, the one who brought destruction upon Gudrun's people, is the Attila of history, is most emphatically denied. Atli, who appears everywhere as the King of Hunaland in northern Germany, has his place of residence in Soest. Rather does it seem to our author that he may have been Italicus, the son of Flavus, who was sent by Rome, at the request of the Cheruscans, to take their throne, since he was the only remaining scion of the royal family. His reign being unsuccessful, he was at one time banished, then reinstated through the aid of the Lombards. This calls to mind the fact that in the northern 'Gudrunlied' Atli is expressly called 'der Langobardr.'

The query is raised whether the Dietrich of saga, who is represented as being dark and ugly, with fiery breath streaming from his mouth, and who disappears in a mysterious manner, might not symbolize the Roman power in Germany; for thirty years Dietrich was banished from his kingdom, and the Roman dominion covered about the same length of time (from 14 A.D. to 47 A.D.).

This pamphlet by Dr. Jellinghaus brought forth an interesting criticism by R. Henning,[1] of Strassburg, in May, 1893. He begins by quoting one of the opening sentences of the paper; "Beweise giebt es so wenig in der Vergleichung von Helden und Göttersagen wie etwa in der Sprachwissenschaft oder in der Ethnologie," and then raises the question, whether the

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1. Anzeiger f. d. Altertum und d. Litteratur, Vol. XX, p. 80-81.

author has been led to this empiric conclusion through the study of our most modern investigation of sagas. He calls in question the reliability of some of the author's source material, such as Mone, Vigfusson, and Schierenberg, saying that he seems to think that by referring to such authors as these, he has a sort of guarantee for the correctness of his hypothesis.

Not only the source material, but also the method of the investigator, is subjected to severe criticism. He suggests that if Jellinghaus had wished to work methodically, he should have adopted as his axiom, that Siegfried can be only a historical character, and furthermore, that he can be no other than Arminius, instead of seeking for single points of comparison in traits of character and single occurrences, in order to evolve finally a great historic-poetic allegory.

To illustrate his point, he cites some of the comparisons made, and comments upon them in the following manner: "Was hilft es, wenn Siegfried nach der einen Version in Westfalen das Schmieden lernte und den Drachen tötete, nicht weit von der Gegend wo Arminius einst den Varus schlug? Muss Varus darum schon der Drache sein? Und wie der Umstand, dass Siegfried den Drachen 'mit anderen Untieren auf einem Holzstosse verbrennt,' daran erinnern soll, 'dass Varus den Römern zugeschickt wurde,' entzieht sich meinem Verständnis. Aber hinter dem Drachen soll nun einmal die römische Weltmacht stecken, welche die Erde umschlingt. Schade nur, dass dabei so viele andere Drachen germanischer und nicht germanischer Mythologien ohne Erklärung ausgehen."

After showing what he considers to be the weak points in Jellinghaus' method of reasoning, Henning casts aside all the results by saying that these things cannot possibly be taken into serious consideration; then he proceeds to outline what he would regard as a scientific method of approaching the subject, viz., to become acquainted with the entire history of German hero legend, then to investigate carefully all the material of the Siegfriedsage, and lastly, to consider whether a better and more consistent explanation may not be found in the old mythical story itself than in any historical event. This, he admits, would not yield the same results, but it would be in imitation of Lachmann and Müllenhoff, whose methods our critic evidently approves.

In 1899 Theodor V. Grienberger,[1] in writing a criticism of a lecture given by Privatdocent Wilh.Uhl on "The Portrait of Arminius," expresses his judgment concerning the name of Arminius. He is strongly of the opinion that it is a German nickname such as was joined to the real name in the old Latin histories with the phrase, 'qui est dictus,' or among the northern nations with 'hinn,' but among the Germans with 'der': as, der Grosse, der Siegreiche, der Gute, etc.

For the basis of the name he takes an adjective or half-participial form, *armena, which is evidently retained, he believes, in the West-Frankish proper names Armingardis and Armenfred. Its signification he thinks to find in a related

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1. Anzeiger f. d. Altertum u. d. Literatur, V. XXV, p. 323-5.

form, O.N. 'rammr' 'strong.' Thus it would be a fitting epithet for the German hero. Grienberger cannot believe that the designation under which he appeared in the German songs mentioned by Tacitus was not a German one, or at least a Latinized form of an original German name.

In 1909, A. Beneke, head-master in Hohenlimburg, celebrated the completion of the nineteenth century since the Varus battle, by publishing a pamphlet[1] which, while dealing minutely with that particular event, had a much broader scope, since it had for its object a complete discussion of the Siegfried-Arminius question. He acknowledges his indebtedness to several German scholars, among whom is Dr. Jellinghaus, the results of whose investigations he has used in part, and which we shall not repeat. He does not claim to have settled the matter, but acknowledges that only a hypothetical value must be ascribed to his work, until it can be confirmed by unquestionable proof obtained from the research of specialists.

In one respect at least, Beneke follows the method of research outlined by Henning: after giving a brief history of Arminius, and contrasting it with the story of Siegfried, he reasons that since it would be contrary to custom for the memory of such a historical hero as Arminius to so entirely disappear, or for such a great legendary character as Siegfried to have no reflected image in history, it must be that these two are one person. He attacks the subject very methodically, taking just

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1. Siegfried und die Varusschlacht in Arnsburger Walde.

one phase at a time, and treating it as fully as possible.

A digest of his theories is as follows:

The Testimonial of Sage

The chief sources of the Siegfried-legend are the German Nibelungenlied and the Scandinavian Edda. Through the transfer of the Siegfried saga to the north, the raising of heroes to divinities, the entrance of Christianity, with its desire to remove the old heathen traditions, and the changes that would naturally take place in the course of centuries, these sources have been considerably altered: new elements have been added, names have been changed, yet in the delineation of their heroes, the chief features would remain, because they represented the ideals of the whole race. If the saga is to be of any value to us, we must try to find the old 'core.'

Brunhilde and her relations may be excluded from the Siegfriedsaga, since they entered with the admission of the Burgundians. Near the end of the eleventh century there were extant: (1) the Seifridlied, (2) probably a song of Siegfried's marriage to Kriemhild and his death, (3) a song of Kriemhild's revenge upon her brothers.

The 'core' of many sagas is the same: murder of relatives. The motive is usually enmity between relatives for some cause or other. The hero of these sagas has different names, but finally, all are the one character--Siegfried.

In connection with Jellinghaus' theory concerning the

location of Hunaland, attention is called to a number of places in Westfalen beginning with 'Hüne-', as Hünenmauern, and the suggestion is offered that 'Hüne-' may mean ancestor. That Westfalen, the region which was the bone of contention both in the wars of the Romans with the Germans, and later of the Franks with the Saxons, held the same place in nearly all these saga, is regarded as significant.

Siegfried-Arminius

A comparison of Vellejus Paterculus' description of Arminius with that of Siegfried in the Edda, yields very satisfactory results: both are of noble birth, courageous, resourceful and clever; special mention is also made, in both history and saga, of their flashing eyes.

The agreement of their life experiences is no less remarkable; both are fatherless; both gain their wives by force of arms; each lives with his wife about ten years; each dies in his prime, leaving a wife and little son; Siegfried says to his murderers when dying: "I saved your life and honor in a terrible time of distress." This would have been just as fitting a remark for Arminius to make.

The Edda mentions Siegfried expressly by Arminius' name, 'Jormon-rekr,' which means, 'powerful, the illustrious hero;' 'Jormon' = 'Irmin' (O.S.) or 'Erman' (O.H.G.). The process of development would be: Ermin, Erman, Herman, Armen, Armin. Arminius may have been an epithet out of which a nickname developed,

as was not unusual (Barbarossa, for example); the Romans would naturally have preferred this to his real name, which means 'victor.'

To assume that Siegfried is Arminius opens the way for another assumption, viz., that Arminius is Irmin. The more the fortunes of the Cheruscans declined after Siegfried's death, the more was his memory exalted; the Irminsäule was erected to his memory—probably at Eresburg, his old home locality—and the people met there on important occasions, to praise his noble deeds. The more his historical form was crowded out by his idealized one, so much the more did his real name give way to his nickname. This was a natural result of the way of thinking at that time: Siegfried, a descendant of the gods, who had proved himself to be stronger than the Roman gods, again became a god through the adoration of his people. That the Saxons worshiped a god Irmin, is proved by historical records. Both J. Grimm and von der Hagen admit that Irmin had a human original.

The Dragon

Since Siegfried's greatest deed is the slaying of the dragon, and Arminius' fame rests on the freeing of Germany from the Romans, we must conclude that the dragon represents the Roman army.

That the dragon speaks, has on helmet, armor, and sword, and lives in a house, shows his human nature; carrying out the simile, the dwelling with doors and framework of iron symbolizes

the fortified camps of the Romans.

Even the methods of conquering the enemy are similar: Siegfried digs pits in Fafnir's way and throws trees upon him; these ditches are expressly mentioned in the Roman reports, also the fact that the army was thrown into confusion by falling trees.

Siegfried is raised by Fafnir's brother; Arminius served a long time in the Roman army. Siegfried bathes in the melted skin of the dragon and becomes horny; Arminius' body is covered by the Roman coat of mail. The dragon is a hindrance to Siegfried's freeing the maid; Segestes, who identifies himself with the Romans, refuses Thusnelda to Arminius.

Hilde

If Siegfried is Arminius, Thusnelda must be his wife. She also has a number of names: Svava, Sigrun, Gudrun, Kriemhild. Her name cannot be German any more than Arminius or Flavus. It may have been German in form originally, however, but suffered alteration in the process of oral transmission to a strange language. Thusnelda might have been derived from 'Dis-' (a woman of high birth or of superhuman nature) and '-hilde,' and would thus mean: the Hilde of noble birth or the Valkyrie Hilde, either of which interpretations would find support in saga. To a Roman ear, Dishilde might very easily have sounded like Thushilde, from which developed Thusnilde or Thusnelde.

In an old Saxon saga which is evidently not a variation of the old Siegfriedsaga, but entirely separate, is found

so clear on outline of the experiences of Thusnelda, that it is easy to believe that this may be another historical source of the same events: we have the father who refuses his daughter Ilda to her suitor; the suitor who, after a hard battle, carries off his bride; the flames, the dragon, the virgin who answers to Thusnelda in both name and characteristics; the discord between father-in-law and son-in-law, and finally the death of both.

Hagen

In the oldest form of the Hagensaga we find Hilde, also the hostility between father-in-law and son-in-law. As far back as we can trace this saga, we find connected with it the Siegfriedsaga. In the one, Hagen appears as the father-in-law of Siegfried, in the other, as his murderer. In history, Segestes is Arminius' father-in-law, as well as his bitterest enemy. That Arminius falls through the treachery of his kindred is declared by Tacitus, but the name of his murderer is not given. Possibly the historical situation may be reflected in the Edda: Siegfried abducts Sigrun, the daughter of Hagen, against the will of her father who had intended her for another. The enmity ends with the murder of Siegfried by Dag, a brother-in-law of Hagen, and at the instigation of the latter. Since Segestes had a nephew named Segisdag, it is possible that the saga may supplement history at this point and thus reveal to us Segestes as the murderer of Arminius through the use of Segisdag as a tool.

If Hagen is Segestes, the process by which he lost his family name may find explanation in the historical statement by Tacitus, that after his liberation by Germanicus in 15 A.D., he and his son Segimund were sent to Vetera, or Xanten, on the Rhine. Thus he became separated from the Cheruscans and was later classed, according to saga, with the Franks who inhabited this region. The Nibelungensaga, before the Burgundensaga was combined with it, spoke of King Hagen of Troja who reigned in Xanten. Since the dukes of the Franks bore the title 'Hugo' at that time, Segestes, the first Hugo of the Franks, became known later, through an alteration of his title,as Hagen.

The Teutoburger Wald

The Roman writers are quite indefinite as to the location of the Varus battle. Tacitus calls it'Saltus Teutoburgiensis;' this has given rise to the popular belief that Arminius met and conquered the Romans in the Teutoburger Wald of today. This is, however, highly improbable, for the ancient name of this mountain was 'Osning;' in a document of 783 it is called 'Osneggi.' Tacitus' designation for it is not to be found anywhere in history from his time down through the middle ages. 'Teut' is of Celtic, not Germanic, origin, and was probably used by the Romans in the sense of 'Volk;' thus 'Teutoburg' would mean 'Volksburg,' and might apply to any populated mountain. Yet the mountain occupied by the largest number of castles would deserve this name more than others, and thus the Arnsberger Wald, with its circle of eighteen or twenty old castles, answers best to this

description. This theory is strengthened by the names found here, such as Deutmecke (Teutbach), Romeke (Rombecke), Steutenberg (Teutenberg), and others. Furthermore, the topography of the country, when studied in connection with the movements of the Roman army, would favor the location of the battleground in this forest. But the strongest proof of all is seen in the finding here of Roman coins belonging to the time of Julius Caesar, old horse-shoes of exactly the same type, even to the smallest detail, as those known to be of Roman make in the Saalburg Museum, and at least a thousand mounds, believed to be graves, in some of which have been found old leather straps and buckles. Such names as Streitberg, Totenkopf, Gräberhagen, etc., might easily have found their origin in the events connected with this battle.

Diametrically opposed to the above theories is that of Dr. Friedrich Panzer,[1] who rejects completely the idea that there can be any historical significance in the Siegfriedsaga, and bases it entirely upon fairy stories of earlier origin. He states that when a fairy story changes to a hero-legend, not only are some of the motives lost in the transition but, on the other hand, the legend usually contains features that are foreign to the fairy story. This latter fact necessitates a further search to find in still other stories the basic material which is lacking. In the 'Bärensohn' fairy tale and those types which he designates as "Märchen vom Brautwerber," "Märchen vom Bedingten Leben," and "Formel vom geborgenen Leben," he believes to have discovered the different sources in which the Siegfriedsaga found its origin.

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1. Studien zur Germanischen Sagengeschichte, Vol. II, 1912.

After commenting on the fact that so many investigators of this saga have sought to discover its interpretation, he says in the introduction to his work: "Es würde mir in der Tat eine Genugtuung sein, wenn mein Buch endgültig darzutun vermöchte, dass die Vorgeschichte dieser Sage nicht am Himmel, sondern auf der Erde zu suchen ist, wenn es die Überze gung allgemein mochte, dass es an dieser Sage zwar immer noch sehr viel zu erforschen, aber schlechterdings nichts zu 'deuten' gibt."

In the work of J. W.Bruinier[1] we find a mean between the two extreme theories represented in the preceding authors. He recognizes in the Siegfriedsage two originally independent parts: one tells of Siegfried the hero and takes us into a fairy world, the other treats of his death and brings in only human relations. The fall of the Burgundians and Etzel's death are excluded from consideration, since they belong to the Burgundian cycle which did not originally belong here. In the Edda and the Volsungsaga we find a much earlier stage of development than in the Nibelungenlied or the Dietrichsaga.

This story of the north, whose leading motive is the winning of a maiden, he finds very similar to the fairy tale of 'Dornröschen' which leads back presumably to a myth of spring. But from this myth have evidently developed several fairy stories very similar to each other and containing no proper names. These were appropriated by a poet and connected with the plot of the tragic death of Siegfried which had been existing in legends for

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1. Die Germanische Heldensage, 1915.

a long time. The deeds of the unknown hero of the fairy story were transferred to the hero Siegfried who was murdered by his wife's relatives.

This oldest Siegfriedsaga which relates an absolutely human life experience allows the conclusion that it may have originated in historical events—indeed, that it may contain the history of Arminius. The author warns us, however, not to compare Siegfried, the dragon-killer, the hoard-winner, the liberator of Brunhild, the original mythical hero, with Arminius, but only the human, legendary Siegfried.

The Arminius legend, so we are told, must have been in existence about five hundred years before the Frankish poet—or poets—united its plot with the ingredients of the fairy story. Then, for the first time, the characters of the latter receive their names. It is the author's opinion that two different poets wrote different epics, one describing Siegfried's youth up to his arrival at the court of the Nibelungs, the other beginning with the wooing of Brunhild for Gunther. In this way a difficulty arose when the two were combined; the two meetings of Siegfried and Brunhild have always disturbed each other. As a purely exterior means of adjustment, the 'Vergessungstrank' was invented. The disposition of Brunhild between the time of her liberation and of the coming of Gunther is another problem which has been variously solved in the different sagas.

The so-called 'Kurze Siegfriedslied' of the Edda, which tells of Siegfried's death, the author believes to be a folk-song

treating of Siegfried-Arminius—probably the original source of the other Siegfriedsagas. In it Brunhild has nothing of the superhuman and the 'Waberlohe' is lacking; Brunhilde is wooed at the court of her brother Etzel; the murder of Siegfried occurs at his wife's side, and his last words are of his son; the greed of Gunther for gold, which also appears in the Waltharilied is here apparent.

In glancing back over the different hypotheses which we have just reviewed, a certain degree of progress may be noted: Giesebrecht made an excellent beginning; he has not only reached some very plausible conclusions, but has woven them together, so that they appear as a whole. On the other hand, Vigfusson, Much, and Jellinghaus have dealt with disconnected details: their papers are a jumble of comparisons in which we see no final unity. Jellinghaus is perhaps inclined to go to extremes in his attempt to recognize in every feature and relation of saga, however insignificant, some historical meaning. Henning's criticism of his paper is excellent.

Beneke has proceeded somewhat more methodically than these: he has quite a full outline of the different phases of the problem, and brings out some interesting ideas, yet he, too, is guilty of having fallen short of a really unified theory. When he has finished, there is something needed to bring the individual parts together.

Panzer has built up an elaborate hypothesis which is above criticism as far as a sense of the whole is concerned, but represents an extreme view, since he is unwilling to see any

historical significance whatever in the Siegfriedsaga.

Bruinier , who has doubtless studied the writings of all these investigators, does not feel inclined to follow Jellinghaus and find everything in saga historically significant, neither does he agree with Panzer in his opposite theory: rather does he choose an intermediate position between them, and assert that the Siegfriedsaga is a composite of history and fiction. In this respect he is doubtless much nearer the truth than any of his predecessors. He has also used a much more scientific method, in that he makes use of the different main sources of the Siegfried-legend in a comparative manner.

II

Legend and History

Before entering upon an investigation of this problem, it is necessary to make a careful study of the source material in both saga and history. If any satisfactory results are to be obtained, we must be able not only to find a certain set of motifs persisting in all the versions of the Siegfried-legend, but also to discover a situation in history which shall correspond to it in outline. To attempt to find every detail of history reflected in saga, or to interpret every feature of saga as having historical meaning, would be useless, when we consider the process by which the saga developed. Indeed, it would not be surprising, where the northern sagas are concerned, to find even mythical elements entering in, since the northern folk possessed such a rich mythology; neither should we think it strange, since the early belief of all Teutonic peoples in dragons, griffins, goblins, and the like, had especially fitted them to appreciate the force of such forms, to come across the symbolical use of these in their saga.

A. Saga.

The oldest literary monument which mentions Siegfried's exploits is the A. S. poem Beowulf (Ca. 730). If we observe chronological order, the Edda (850-1050) and the Volsungasaga (Ca. 1200) of the north should be mentioned next, although the Siegfriedslied or 'Lied vom hürnen Seyfrid,' which first appeared

in printed form in the sixteenth century, is probably of much earlier origin. The Thidreksaga (Ca. 1250), a collection of sagas containing fragments of Low German songs, represents the North German form of the Siegfried-legend and agrees in its main outline with the Nibelungenlied (Ca. 1200), which is of Austrian origin.

In none of these versions do we find a pure form of the Siegfried-legend. All are evidently the result of a fusion, at some early period, of two separate cycles of saga, viz., those of Siegfried and of the Burgundians. How or why this was done, we have no means of knowing. When it happened is only a matter of conjecture; but it must have been long enough after the time of the historical characters involved, so that they could have become legendary, and thus their real relation to each other would be more or less uncertain in the minds of the people. Allowing at least a century or so to elapse, in order that this change may have taken place (reckoning from 437 A.D., when the Huns almost exterminated the Burgundians), we may assume that the connection of these two stories may have occurred in the sixth century. That this process began on German soil is quite certain, judging from the historical characters involved and places mentioned, such as Gunther (Gundicarius), Giselher (Gislaharius), Gibich (Gibicus) of the Burgundians, the cities of Worms and Santen, the Rhine,etc.; that the saga underwent still further development in the north is also evident from the marked mythological element which particularly characterizes the Scandinavian versions. To make a distinct

cleavage between these two cycles of saga is a most difficult task, if not an impossible one, yet a careful study of the versions may assist in reaching some definite conclusions.

That the independent story of Siegfried migrated to Britain during the Völkerwanderung is very probable, since we find it mentioned in Beowulf.[1] We hear how Sigemund, the Waelsing, fought and slew a dragon, which melted in its own fire, and gained the treasure which it had been guarding; but no mention is made of the Burgundians. The fact that the hero is called Sigemund instead of Siegfried does not offer any serious difficulties, since it would be easy to confuse one name with the other because of their similarity in form, especially when they belonged to father and son. Since this account is only thrown in parenthetically between the parts of another narrative, we cannot expect to find more than the most important feature of it, viz., the killing of the dragon; Siegfried would naturally stand in the background, since Beowulf is the hero of this epic.

In the Siegfriedslied appears a form of the Siegfried-legend which gives the hero a two-fold motive for killing the dragon, i.e., to rescue a maiden and win a treasure. Since all the features of the A. S. poem are included in this, the introduction of the maiden into the plot might mean nothing more than that this is a detailed account of the same story. The poem is very loosely constructed, being composed of two distinct parts which are evidently different versions of the same legend.

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1. Beowulf, Simrock ed. pp. 46-7, ll. 39-64.

The first part, consisting of fifteen strophes, runs as follows: In Niederland lived King Sigmund who had a son named Seyfrid. The boy was large and strong, and so wilful that he gave his parents much anxiety. Wishing to be independent, Seyfrid left home, came to a village at the edge of a wood, and there entered the service of a blacksmith. But he was so strong that he drove the anvil into the ground with his powerful blows, and so hard to get along with that his master wished to get rid of him. Knowing that a dragon lived in the forest, he sent the boy past his haunt for charcoal. But Seyfrid killed and roasted the monster; bathing himself in the melted horn from its scales, he became invulnerable except between his shoulders. Then the hero went to King Gibich's court and won his daughter for a wife,whom he had eight years.

The second part of the poem tells the same story with variations, additions, and even contradictions. In the city of Worms on the Rhine lived a king named Gybich, who had three sons, Gunther, Hagen, and Gyrnot, also a beautiful daughter, Kriemhild. One day a dragon came flying along and carried Kriemhild to a high cliff in a dark forest, where he kept her for years. He slept with his head in her lap, and hoped to make her his wife when he regained his human form; for he was an enchanted prince.

Seyfrid, son of a mighty king, famed for his strength, was riding in a forest, when his dog scented the trail of the dragon. They followed it to the cliff, where Seyfrid met Engel, King of the dwarfs, from whom he learned of his parents, whom he

had never seen. Engel tells him that his father's name was Segimund, and his mother's Segelinde. On being told of Kriemhild's captivity, Seyfrid, with Engel's help, kills the dragon and rescues her. The treasure which Seyfrid found under the dragon's rock did not belong to the dragon, but to Engel's brothers, the Nybelings. As the couple start away, Engel prophecies that Seyfrid will have his wife only eight years, that he will be murdered guiltless, his wife will avenge his death so fearfully that not a hero will be left on earth, and will suffer violent death. When they reach the Rhine, Seyfrid thinks of Engel's prophecy and casts the treasure into the stream, since no one could enjoy it long. Having arrived at King Gybich's court, the wedding takes place, Seyfrid exercises such strict justice, that under his rule the greatest peace prevails. Therefore, he is envied by his brothers-in-law, who find themselves obscured by his brightness. They conspire against him, and Hagen, who is chosen to kill him, stabs him between the shoulders when he is bending over a spring.

In the first part no treasure is mentioned, and Seyfrid finds the maiden at her father's court; in the second, he delivers her from the dragon, finds the treasure, and takes her home. The construction of the poem indicates an early stage in the combination of the two cycles of saga, since the plot is so simple. In this, we can see, as Dr. J. Goebel[1] suggests, that Seyfrid's greatest deed, the slaying of the dragon, is chosen to bring together the two stories.

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1. Journal of Eng. and Germ. Philol. Vol. XVII, No. 1, p. 15.

The following comparative table will serve to demonstrate how closely the other sagas agree with the Siegfriedslied in its main motifs.

	Hero	Father	Dragon	Treasure	Maiden	Murder by Relatives	Additional Features
Seyfrids-lied	Seyfrid	Sigmund	Yes	Yes	Kriemhild	Motive: jealousy of brothers-in-law	
Northern Saga (Edda and Volsungasaga)	Sigurd	Sigmund	Fafnir	Fafnir's	Gudrun	Motives: jealousy and avarice of relatives	(1) Sigurd descends from Odin. (2) Brynhild is a valkyrie. (3) Fanciful elements
Thidreksaga	Sigfrid	Sigmund	Regin	Regin's	Grimhild	Motives: jealousy and avarice of relatives	(1) and (2) of northern saga lacking, and (3) less prominent.
Nibelungen-lied	Siegfried	Sige-munt	Mentioned incidentally	Mentioned incidentally	Kriemhild	Motives: jealousy and avarice of relatives	(1) and (2) lacking; (3) less prominent than in the Thidreksage.

Since the killing of a dragon is a most heroic exploit, we may say that the above diagram gives in outline the story of a hero named Siegfried, son of Sigmund, who performs a heroic deed, gains thereby a treasure, wins by forcible means, and possibly in connection with his greatest achievement, a maiden named Kriemhild for his wife, and dies some time later at the hand of his relatives who are jealous of him and desire his treasure.

It now remains for us to review the life of Arminius, to see whether the main motifs as given above can be detected in it. If so, we have a sufficiently firm historical basis to justify us in pursuing the investigation of the problem still further.

B. History.

Arminius[1], the first great heroic character of German history, must have been born about 16 B. C. His father was Sigimer[2], a prince of the tribe of the Cheruscans, which occupied the territory[3] stretching westward from the Elbe beyond the Weser, into the eastern part of what is now Westfalen. This people had no kings; the highest political authority was vested in their princes. Arminius[4], who was qualified by disposition as well as by birth to be a leader of his people, filled this place well.

The Romans, whose government had subdued the country

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1. Vellejus II, 118.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, 105.
4. Tacitus, II, 88.

as far as the Rhine, were planning to move their boundary line still farther to the Elbe[1]. They did this by peaceful[2] means as far as possible, and built fortresses[3] through the land. As long as the relations between Romans and Germans was friendly, the sons of German princes were accustomed to enter into Roman military service. This was true of Arminius, who was given command of the Cheruscan troops.[4] About 7 A. D., a new Roman governor, Quinctilius Varus, was sent to 'Germania.' He had previously been holding the same position in Syria.[5] He was so unwise in his treatment of the Germans,[6] that they soon became restive and discontented. This was especially true of the Cheruscans. Varus, recognizing this fact, moved his available men into the very midst of their country in the year 9 A.D.[7] A conspiracy arose among them whose leader was Arminius. But not all of his people were in sympathy with his cause. Segestes, his father-in-law, was leader of an opposed party which was favorable to the Roman government.[8] He was also Arminius' enemy for personal reasons, because the latter had carried off and married Segestes' daughter who was already betrothed to another.[9] Arminius' plan progressed so quietly and carefully, that Varus was lulled into a sense of false security and would not let himself be disturbed, even when warned by Segestes.[10] Knowing well the

1. Kauffman d. Altertumskunde, p. 336.
2. Ibid, p. 340.
3. Ibid, pp. 337-8.
4. Tacitus II, 10.
5. Kauffmann, d. Alt. p. 342-3.
6. Vellejus II, 117.
7. Ibid; Dio 56, 18.
8. Tacitus I, 55.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid; Dio 56,19.

hostility between the two men, he doubtless saw in it only an attempt of Segestes to harm Arminius. Since Varus neglected to act, Segestes took matters into his own hands and threw Arminius into chains; in retaliation Arminius' followers did the same to Segestes,[1] and Varus had to be called to settle the matter.[2]

When the number of insurgents had become large enough to warrant it, plans were perfected for the revolt; in order to scatter the Roman forces, uprisings were to take place in different regions occupied by Arminius' adherents, especially in those which were at the outer edge of the revolting territory.[3] The exact truth as to the manner of the Varus battle cannot be determined from the different historical sources, because they disagree; but whether the revolt began in camp,[4] or on the march,[5] or whether both reports may be true, each concerning a different division of the Roman army, one fact stands out incontestibly—the three Roman legions commanded by Varus were practically annihilated and Varus took his own life.[6] To accurately locate the battle field has been a problem to all investigators, but it was in the Cheruscan territory, at any rate; some would place it in the Lippe-Detmold region. Special mention is made of the spoils taken from the Romans.[7]

This battle in the 'Teutoburger Wald,' as Tacitus calls it, resulted in a more sweeping victory than any of those which

1. Tacitus I, 58.
2. Florus 2, 30.
3. Dio 56, 19.
4. Florus, IV, 12.
5. Tacitus I, 61.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid, I, 57.

followed, and is usually the only one mentioned in connection with Arminius' career; yet had he not followed this with a persistent struggle against Roman rule, the result would have been far different for Germany. Soon after the Varus battle, the remnant of the Roman army which had taken refuge in the fortress at Aliso, retreated to the Rhine.[1]

There was no further attempt on the part of the Romans to move their boundary line from the Rhine to the Elbe, but Germanicus, who became governor of Germania in 12 A.D., took it upon himself to punish the German tribes which had taken part in the uprising.[2] He fell upon them with such terrible slaughter and devastation of territory, that Arminius advised his people to take up arms again against the Romans. But Segestes and his party opposed the idea. Evidently the feud between Arminius and his father-in-law had kept pace with their political hostility, for Tacitus tells that Segestes sent to Germanicus for relief against the violence of his countrymen by whom he was being besieged.[3] When the Roman general came and rescued Segestes together with a number of his relatives and followers, Arminius' wife Thusnelda was found among them. That she may have been an unwilling prisoner in her father's house is possible—indeed this may have been one of the prime reasons why Segestes' house was besieged—for Tacitus says of her: "With a spirit more like that of her husband than her father; neither subdued to tears, nor uttering the language of supplication."[4] We are told that Segestes and his

1. Dio 56, 22
2. Tacitus I, 56.
3. Ibid, I, 57.
4. Ibid.

family were taken to Vetera for safety, but Thusnelda was carried to Italy as a prisoner, where she gave birth to a son.[1]

The news of his wife's captivity stirred up Arminius tremendously; he flew about among the Cheruscans and neighboring peoples, calling them to arms against Germanicus and Segestes.[2] His appeals met with a vigorous response, and even his uncle, Inguiomer,who had heretofore held himself aloof, now joined the confederacy.[3]

Finally matters came to a crisis when Germanicus, after having devastated neighboring territory, entered the land of the Cheruscans, to visit the Varus battle field and bury the bones of the slain which had been lying there for six years.[4] Arminius, who was in a state of constant vigilance, led his army against the Romans in such a furious attack, that it would doubtless have been a repetition of the Varus battle, had not darkness put an end to the conflict. The result might have been a final victory for the Germans, if Inguiomer had not insisted on storming the camp, instead of waiting until the Romans should come out on soft, boggy ground.[5] As it was, the Germans suffered heavy losses. From this time there seems to have been a coolness between Arminius and Inguiomer, which finally resulted in the desertion of the latter to Marobodus, the Suevian king, "For no other cause,"says Tacitus, "than disdain that the veteran uncle should obey his

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1. Tacitus I, 58.
2. Ibid I, 59.
3. Ibid I, 60.
4. Ibid I, 61, 62.
5. Ibid I, 63-68.

youthful nephew."[1] Also Flavus, Arminius' brother, who had been serving in the Roman army, refused to espouse the cause of his fatherland. Tacitus gives us a vivid picture of the interview of the two brothers, with the Weser flowing between them, the night before the battle of Idistavisto. The only result was a heated dispute and probably increased hostility between them.[2]

Yet, in spite of the enmity of kindred, Arminius did not falter. Resolved to try every means of strengthening his forces, that very night he sent to the Roman camp a messenger, who called out in the name of his leader, offering to every deserter a wife and land, and, as long as the war should last, one hundred sersteces a day. This only kindled the wrath of the enemy, however, and incited them to fiercer conflict.[3] On the following day the armies met in battle, but owing to a failure in the carrying out of Arminius' plans, the Germans were routed.[4]

But Arminius and his allies did not dream of final submission. Upon seeing the Roman soldiers build a mound of German weapons upon the field of battle and place upon it the German arms with the names of all the vanquished nations inscribed below, "people, nobles, youth, aged, all rush suddenly upon the Roman army and disorder it."[5] A hand-to-hand conflict now ensued in which the Germans, hampered in narrow places and unable to wield their immense spears, were no match for the Roman soldiers, armed

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1. Tac. II, 45.
2. Ibid, II, 10.
3. Ibid, II, 13.
4. Ibid, II, 14-17.
5. Ibid, II, 18,19.

with swords and in coats of mail.[1] Germanicus now raised another pile of German arms with this inscription: "The army of Tiberius, having subdued the nations between the Rhine and the Elbe, dedicates this monument to Mars, Jupiter, and Augustus."[2] Germanicus believed that the German people were now weakening, and hoped to be able to complete his conquest by the following summer.[3] But Tiberius sent for him to come home, saying that "The Cheruscans and the other hostile nations, now that the Roman honor was vindicated, might be left to pursue their own intestine feuds."[4]

Germanicus returned to Rome the following year (17) with every appearance of having won a complete victory over the Germans. A triumphal arch was raised and in the triumphal procession were the spoils and captives of war, among whom were Thusnelda and her three-year-old son Thumelicus.[5] What became of the child we are not told. Of one thing we are sure, however, that he was not living in 47 A.D. when the Cheruscans asked the Romans to give them Italicus, son of Flavus, for their king, since he was the only prince left of the royal family of Arminius.[6] Yet in spite of Germanicus' demonstrations, Tacitus, in summing up the life of Arminius, admits that 'while he was defeated in single battles, he had not been worsted in the general issue of the war, and that without doubt he was the deliverer of Germany.[7]

1. Tac. II, 20,21.
2. Ibid, II, 22.
3. Ibid, II, 26.
4. Ibid.
5. Strabo, VII, 1.
6. Tacitus, XI, 16.
7. Ibid, II, 88.

Tiberius' statement of his policy (p. 48) seemed almost prophetic: Arminius, recognizing, without doubt, the need of a more closely organized government in order to preserve their national life, sought to have bestowed upon himself the title of king. But this only stirred up the envy and jealousy of the other Cheruscan nobles, and the great mass of the people resisted strongly, even taking up arms.[1] In 19 A.D. Adgandestrius, a Chattian prince, (according to R. Much,[2] the father-in-law of Flavus) made an offer to the Roman senate to kill Arminius, if they would furnish the poison. This the Romans refused to do, but later, as Tacitus tells us, he fell by the treachery of his own kindred.[3] With his death the best days of the Cheruscan people were at an end. Only a generation later, as has been noted (p. 48), the royal family was almost extinct. In the time of Tacitus, about seventy years after Arminius' death, the tribe had so deteriorated that he says: "The Cheruscans, who formerly bore the titles of just and upright, are now charged with cowardice and folly."[4]

It now remains for us to look through the story of Arminius, keeping in mind the main motives of the Siegfried-legend as given above, and to decide whether or not there is a close correspondence between them. Expressing the result in the simplest form possible, we have the story of a hero named Arminius, son of Sigimer, who performs the heroic deed of freeing Germany from the power of the Romans, gains treasure in the spoils of war, wins by forcible means a maiden named Thusnelda for his wife, and dies later at the hand of his relatives who are jealous of him.

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1. Tacitus, II, 88.
2. Haupt-Zeitschrift f.d. Altertum, V. 35,367.
3. Tacitus, II, 88. 4. Tac. Vol. II, 326.

III

Siegfried-Arminius

That a superficial survey of the lives of Siegfried and Arminius yields such satisfactory results, furnishes an incentive to enter more deeply into the subject.

A study of the old Teutonic names indicates a marked tendency to follow certain definite principles in the naming of children, using as a base the name of one of the parents. (1) inflection through ablaut: Ada, Oda (Uota); (2) through alliteration: Gibich, Gunther, Gernot, Giselher; (3) agreement with either the first or second part of the parent's name: Deotwich, Deotswind; Amalgardis, Raingardis, Angilgardis.[1]

The names of Siegfried's kinsmen show a domination of the first part, 'Seg-' or 'Sig-': Sige (his great-great- grandfather),[2] Sigmund (his father),[3] Signy (his aunt),[4] Sigelinde (his mother),[5] Sigmund (his son)[6]

On the other hand, in the royal family of the Cheruscans are: Sigimer (Arminius' father),[7] Segestes (distant relative and father-in-law of Arminius),[8] Segimund (Segestes' son).[9] Thumelicus

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1. "Die Deutsche Frauen in dem Mittelalter," Weinhold, 78 ff.
2. Volsungasaga, Chap. I.
3. Ibid, Chap. II; Nibelungenlied, Av. II, str. 1.
4. Volsungasaga, Chap. II.
5. Nibelungenlied, Av. II, str. 1.
6. Skáldskaparmál, 6.
7. Vellejus, II, 118.
8. Tacitus, I, 55.
9. Ibid, I, 57.

(Arminius' son)[1] is named for his mother, Thusnelda,[2] by alliteration. In the case of Arminius and his brother Flavus,[3] it is certain that their names are not constructed according to any of the above-mentioned principles. Their form would allow the conjecture that they may have been Roman names, yet there are other possibilities: the Cheruscans belonged to a larger group of German tribes called Herminonen after their god Irmin. This name, which means 'shining,' 'brilliant,' 'sublime,' appears in old writings as a component part of proper names: Irmingot, Irmingart, etc.[4] In 'Arminius' it may also echo, as the religious epithet of the most magnificent hero of the race. The change of initial vowel from 'i' to 'a' could have taken place through ablaut. 'Flavus' may have been derived from the adjective 'flaxen-colored,' as descriptive of its owner. If the above-mentioned suggestions were proved to be correct, there would still be left the possibility that the brothers may have had family names similar to those of their kinsmen. In that case, since there is such a marked similarity of form between the names of the members of these two family groups, the one legendary, the other historical, it would tend to strengthen the theory that Siegfried is Arminius.

A comparison of the personal characteristics of the two heroes is also very important; for whatever other changes legend may make in a historical character, it is not likely to alter his

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1. Strabo, 7, 4.
2. Ibid.
3. Tacitus, II, 10.
4. Meyers' Konversations-Lexicon, V. 9, p. 18.

leading qualities, although it may magnify them. Vellejus Paterculus, who was evidently personally acquainted with Arminius, testifies of him: "A youth of noble family, brave hand, quick perception, clever mind, more than barbarians are."[1] Tacitus says: "Arminius was the incendiary of Germany . . . . Arminius having more influence with them (Cheruscans) because he advised war; for with barbarians, the more resolute a man is, the more he is trusted and preferred."[2] To be brief, the entire record of Arminius' career is a constant recital of bravery, daring, energy, resourcefulness. That we are dependent upon his political enemies for all that we know of Arminius, is an assurance that their testimony is no exaggeration, for enemies do not flatter. In the Volsungasaga it is said of Siegfried (Sigurd): "And where all the most superior men and kings are mentioned in saga, Sigurd must take the lead, as far as strength, aptness, energy, and boldness are concerned . . . Never did he lack in courage, and never did he know fear."[3] The Thidreksaga recognizes his quickness to think and act by calling him "der schnelle Sigfrid."

Tacitus witnesses to Arminius' elequence and powers of persuasion in different places. After Germanicus had carried off his wife into captivity, Arminius stirred up his people to take up arms, saying:'An excellent father! a great general! a valiant army, whose many hands had carried off one bit of a woman! That before him three legions fell, three lieutenant-generals; for his

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1. Vellejus, II, 118.
2. Tacitus, I, 57.
3. Volsungasaga, Chap. 22.

method was not by treason . . . . but openly, against armed hosts . . . . Segestes might live upon the vanquished bank; . . . . but the Germans would always regard the fellow as the guilty cause of their having seen between Rhine and Elbe rods, axes, and the toga . . . . If they preferred their country, their parents, and their ancient possessions to masters and new settlements, they should follow Arminius who led them to glory and liberty, rather than Segestes, who conducted them to infamous servitude."[1] The survivors of the Varus battle also told how Arminius held a tribunal, executed the Roman captives, and in proud scorn made a mock at the standards and eagles.[2] On the eve of a battle with the Suevians after Inguiomer with his followers had deserted to them, Arminius sought to inspire his men by reminding them of 'their liberty recovered, the slaughtered legions, the spoils and arms wrested from the Romans still in the hands of many.' Calling Marobodus (king of the Suevians) a runaway, he described him as one who was 'inexperienced in fighting, a betrayer of his country, a lifesguardsman of Caesar, worthy to be exterminated in the indignant spirit with which they had slaughtered Quinctilius Varus.'[3]

On the other hand, Sigurd is described thus: "He was bold in speech, elequent, liked to deliberate with his friends . . . All who heard him were compelled to believe that it could not be otherwise than as he said."[4]

That both men had eyes full of fire and spirit, is

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1. Tacitus, I, 59.
2. Ibid, 61.
3. Ibid, 45.
4. Wilkinasaga, 166.

especially emphasized. Vellejus says of Arminius: "Out of whose face and eyes shone the fire of his soul."[1] In the Volsungasaga, when King Hjalprek "saw the sharp eyes which he (Sigurd) had in his head, he was glad."[2] Fafni said to Sigurd: "You boy with the sparkling eyes;"[3] "his eyes were so piercing that few dared to look under his eyebrows."[4] Gutthorm had to wait until Sigurd was asleep, before he could murder him, because he could not meet that penetrating look.[5] In Sigurdarkvida, Brynhild says to Sigurd: "I thought I knew your eyes, but was not sure because of the darkness."[6] To find any closer agreement of legend with history in the delineation of character than is displayed in the above extracts, would be difficult.

As to the native land of our heroes, the sources are quite unreliable. The different sagas use different names for the same places, and even the historians' geographical information is vague. Yet by an interpretative method some agreement may be reached.

The Cheruscans occupied the land between the Elbe and Weser in the time of Tacitus,[7] but it is probable that in Augustus' reign they extended even westward from the Weser.[8]

"Sinfjotlis Tod" begins: "Sigmund, Wolsungs Sohn, war

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1. Vellejus, II, 118.
2. Volsungasaga, 13.
3. Ibid, 18.
4. Ibid, 22.
5. Ibid, 30; Corp. Poet, p. 398.
6. Corp. Poet, p. 397.
7. Tacitus, I, 59.
8. Ibid, Vol. II, p. 326, N. 2.

König in Frankenland;" "Sigurdarkvida en skamma" calls Sigurd "der hunnishe König;" in the Volsungasaga, Sige, Odin's son, ruled over "Hunaland."[1] The Wilkinasaga informs that Sigmund (Siegfried's father) ruled over the land called "Tarlungen,"[2] which is interpreted by v. d. Hagen to mean "Kärlingen, a part of the Carolingian Kingdom. The Nibelungenlied says that Siegfried's home was in Santen, and that his father was king of 'Niderlant.'

It is R. C. Boer's opinion that 'Hunaland' means the same as Saxland (Sachsen).[3] The Cheruscan territory could be included under any of these three names: Frankenland, Hunaland, Kärlingen. 'Santen of Niderlant' is the most difficult to explain, for it refers to a locality outside of Cheruscan boundaries. It may be that A. Beneke is correct, when he suggests that the later contributors to the saga, having become confused concerning the locality, have associated Siegfried with Xanten, the old Castra Vetera of the Romans, which was the central point for all military expeditions in the north at the time when Arminius was in the service of the Romans.[4] If this could be known with certainty, it would be the best possible proof of the identity of Siegfried and Arminius.

To interpret Siegfried's killing the dragon as a symbolical representation of Arminius' great deed, the liberation of his native land, may seem at first sight rather fanciful. Yet, in order

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1. Volsungasaga, Chap. I.
2. V. d. Hagen, "Heldensagen," p. 321, n. 1.
3. "Die Sagen von Ermanarich u. Dietrich v. Bern," R. C. Boer, 301.
4. Siegfried u. d. Varusschlacht, pp. 23-4.

to render a perfectly fair decision on this point, it is necessary to get, as far as possible, the situation out of which the poem developed—the viewpoint of the people for whom it was intended.

The dragon is a mythical being which has figured largely in the early history of different peoples, and has always represented a mighty, and usually harmful, power. The conception of such a monster seems to have originated in the East, where there were large and deadly snakes; hence the dragon, or serpent, was representative of the principle of evil. Dragon stories are found among all Indogermanic peoples.[1] Also griffins, fabulous creatures, half lion, half eagle, were similar to dragons in their habits; they were supposed to watch over mines of gold and hidden treasure and to abduct maidens and children. In Germanic poetry, the earliest appearance of the griffin is in the 'Annolied' (Ca. 1130) which mentions Alexander's ride through the air on the backs of two griffins. Other similar instances are: the abduction of young Hagen by a griffin in 'Gudrun;' in 'Willehalm' queen Gyburg dreams of griffins; in the 'Rabenschlacht' Frau Helke dreams that a wild dragon carries away her son; in the 'Heldenbuch' Hildebrand tells his wife that a griffin has carried off the "Berner;"[2] Wolfram mentions in 'Parzival' another saga of griffins which were guardians of gold and precious stones;[3] in 'Titurel' griffins guard gold treasures;[4] Konrad's 'Trojaner Krieg' (5860) tells of Schryon's

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1. Myers' Konv.-Lex. V. 5, p. 100.
2. Herzog, Ernst, Bartsch ed. pp. I-CX.
3. Parzival, 71,17.
4. Titurel, 3346, 8.

fights with griffins; Konrad von Megenburg represents the griffin as being hostile to men and horses; the Meisterlieder of the Kolmar Ms. uses the griffin in a symbolical sense to represent the devil.

In the Bible we find the first mention of the dragon, or serpent, in a symbolical manner.[1] In Asia the dragon was a symbol of despotism; amongst the Germans, a secret guardian of riches. It was the office of heroes to exterminate dragons and giants from the world. Thor himself fights the 'Midgardsschlange;'[2] the Hindoos have a dragon killed by the god Indra; the Greeks, by Apollo; in the Celtic saga Tristan is the dragon-killer; in the Lombardian saga, Ortnit; in the English saga, Beowulf, Arthur, and Lancelot. The dragon myths of the pagan East took shape in the victories of St. Michael and St. George. With the migration of the latter to the West, it became a story symbolical of the Christian life: St. George represents the servant of God who has on the Christian armor, and is called upon to fight "that old serpent, the devil."[3] Since the dragon-myth has come down through many centuries from the prehistoric past, always associated with the idea of great power and evil, it is easy to see how this came to be used in a symbolical way, just as we speak nowadays, calling a greedy person a 'hog,' a comical one a 'monkey,' a ship a 'monster of the deep.' Yet no one is deceived; we know that such terms are used because the second is an embodiment of that characteristic which

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1. Genesis 3; Rev. 12, 9; 20, 2; Deut. 32, 33.
2. Meyers' Konversations-Lexicon, Vol. V, p. 100.
3. Curious Myths of the Middle Ages, by S. Baring-Gould, pp.266-316.

we wish to attribute to the first, and because this form of speech is much more striking than to use the simple adjective. If this manner of speaking appeals to us today, much more would it do so to those of earlier times. As a child delights in pictures, so the simple, unreflective mind found greater meaning in a picture-form of some kind than in a mere descriptive word. Especially in poetry, where a particularly fine effect was desired, the poet would not fail to use this manner of speech to a greater or less extent. We do not know whether the songs which Tacitus[1] refers to contained any account of a dragon-fight—perhaps not. But to some poetic mind which saw Rome, the great, the powerful nation, supposed to be almost invincible, making steady, victorious progress into the very heart of Germany, and then beheld the hero Arminius come forward and send that proud foe back in final defeat, it pictured itself as a fight with a dragon: Siegfried-Arminius, the undaunted hero, bravely attacks the monstrous dragon, Rome—such an evil power in Germany—and slays him, i.e., kills his political power. Truly, a striking and appropriate figure! Yet it would not deceive any of the poet's hearers. Who did not know of Siegfried-Arminius and the great service which he rendered to his country? Who did not know how Rome had enslaved the freedom of the peoples who were subject to her? How eloquently the dragon-story tells it all to them! And the treasure—for dragons are always supposed to have one—that would, of course be the silver and gold vessels and money taken as spoils after the defeat of Varus. For Arminius

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1. Tacitus, II, 88.

makes special mention of "the spoils and arms wrested from the Romans, still in the hands of many."[1]

In connection with the subject of these Roman spoils should be mentioned a discovery which has given rise to considerable speculation. (We are indebted to Otto Seek[2] and Friedr. Wieseler[3] for the information given below.) A large quantity of silver utensils was unearthed near Hildesheim, October 17, 1868, while soldiers were digging preparatory to laying the foundation of a shooting-stand for the infantry. About nine feet below the surface were found about sixty whole pieces and a number of fragments. There were dishes appropriate for table use, drinking bouts, and cooking. In weight, style, type of workmanship, place of inscription, forms of letters and signs, manner of execution of inscriptions, (puncturing or scratching), these vessels give clear evidence of belonging to the Augustan age.

It seems to be quite generally believed that this is war booty from the Varus battle: (1) it was found in the old Cheruscan territory, not far from the supposed site of the engagement; (2) there had been no great defeat of the Romans either before or after that of Varus, from which such booty could have been gained; (3) besides, no Roman army had come into that region much later than Germanicus; (4) with the exception of possibly two pieces, it is all Roman silver.

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1. Tacitus, II, 45.
2. "Der Hildesheimer Silberfund," Bonn, 1868.
3. "Der Hildesheimer Silberfund," in "Deutsche Rundschau", Apr.-Je. 1911.

That these utensils had belonged to Varus is believed quite probable: (1) two dishes of beautiful workmanship, with relief-work in the bottom (such were placed on the table simply as show-pieces), and evidently meant to go together, contain, according to Wieseler's judgment, figures of the divinities Rhea-Cybele and Lunus, both of whom were worshipped in Syria, but not in European Greece or Rome. These could have been bought—or appropriated—by Varus during his governorship in Syria.[1] Seek also believes that Varus was the Roman possessor of this silver, but for a different reason, viz., two beautiful cups have inscribed on them the name of Lucius Manlius Bocchus, as an earlier possessor. The fact that Bocchus is a Moorish African name, and the first two are Roman, shows that he must have been a prince of his province who enjoyed Roman citizenship. Since Varus had been Proconsul of Africa before he was transferred to Asia, he probably got them there. (2) The first two dishes mentioned, together with a Minerva and a Hercules, are evidently antique pieces, dating from about 200 B.C. That they had been the property of a wealthy collector of antique silver is indicated by the fact that the relief work, which is old and worn, has been taken out of the old plate and inserted in a new one. Varus was a wealthy man, as Vellejus so emphatically states: "Poor he entered the rich country (Syria) and rich he left a poor land."[2] Doubtless he used these pieces at his banquets to impress the Germans with their splendor. (3)

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1. Vellejus, II, 117.
2. Ibid.

The utensils belonged to some one who had remained in camp for a long time, since no one would take such things along on an ordinary military campaign. Varus had a camp in this region and was more accustomed to the idleness of camp-life than to field-service.[1]

Granting that the silver had belonged to Varus, it would of course become the property of the victors. A seeming proof that this had been in the possession of some German is found in two vessels which stand in marked contrast to the others in the quality of execution. A peculiar geometrical design identical with that found on prehistoric pots of Germany, marks them as being of German make; but there is also an evident copying of designs from the other pieces. This would indicate that the maker of the tankards had used the Roman designs as his model.

That this,probably the most valuable part of the spoils, should fall to Arminius, as the prince and leader, would not be strange. Some things would seem to prove that this was so: (1) a number of vessels are more or less mutilated,—in fact, only small fragments of some remain. The missing pieces may have been cut off to be used as money ("Hacksilber"), since there was no regularly-established monetary system in Germany then. It is noticeable, however, that the finest pieces remain almost intact. This would show that the German owner must have had an appreciation of their real artistic worth. Who,of the Germans more than Arminius, had been in touch with Roman culture?

Wieseler, in discussing the probable reasons why these

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1. Vellejus II, 117.

utensils were not dug up and used as trophies of victory after the departure of the Romans, reminds us of the civil strife among the Cheruscans which so closely affected Arminius; his life was full of struggles and dangers—even his relatives became his enemies. Possibly the knowledge that he owned this valuable treasure was the immediate cause of his death. But his murderer failed to find it, after all.

Resuming the work of comparison, a reflection of Thusnelda's abduction may be seen in the rescue of Kriemhild from the power of the dragon. Since the dragon has been interpreted as being representative of the Roman power, the figure may be carried still further by saying that Thusnelda's father Segestes, being a friend of Rome, would be classed with the Romans. Thus, when Arminius carries her away, he is, in a sense, rescuing her from the power of Rome. That Thusnelda was willing to be delivered is certain, since she hated the Roman oppression as much as Arminius did.[1]

The names of Kriemhild, Gudrun, and Thusnelda have given a great deal of trouble to students of this question. In the Seyfridslied, the Thidreksaga, and the Nibelungenlied, the name of Siegfried's wife is Kriemhild or Grimhild; only in the northern saga do we hear of Gudrun. Dr. J. Goebel's suggestion seems to shed light upon the problem, viz., that since the Atlakvida, a very old Eddic Lay, contains nothing which would indicate any previous marriage of Gudrun with Sigurd, this feature must have been added later, in order to connect the two cycles of saga; also that the

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1. Tacitus, I, 57.

magic potion which makes Gudrun forget Sigurd and marry Attila is a device introduced at the same time, to furnish a plausible excuse for her second marriage, since Gudrun does not, like Kriemhild of the Nibelungenlied, marry again, in order to be able to avenge the death of her husband; furthermore, that Brynhild is introduced here as Attila's sister (daughter of Budli[2] Attila's father), in order to supply a motive for Attila's destruction of the Burgundians, i.e., to avenge his sister's death.[1]

It seems to be a generally accepted opinion that the names Thusnelda and Kriemhild, or Grimhild, are identical. (See R. Much's theory, p. 15). It is, however, true that a comparison of the lives of the two women does not yield satisfactory results. As has already been noted, the slaying of the dragon was evidently chosen to be the connecting link between the two sagas. Thus, Siegfried won for his wife the maiden whom he rescued, who was a daughter of the Burgundian king. Then it would be necessary, granting that Arminius is Siegfried, for some adjustment to be made between the Burgundian maiden and Thusnelda. It must be, judging from the situation as we find it, that the personality of Gibich's daughter is retained, but she is given the name of Thusnelda (Kriemhilde), since we find no trace of the real Thusnelda in the saga.

But how is the name 'Gudrun' of the northern saga to be accounted for? Possibly it is due simply to a confusion of the names of mother and daughter (since Grimhild is Gudrun's mother)

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1. Journal of Eng. and Germ. Philol. Vol. XVII, No. 1, p. 6.ff.
2. Brot af Sigurdarkvida, 10, 14; Sigurdarkvida en skamma, 16, 30.

in the same way that Siegfried is called by his father's name in Beowulf. Another possibility is, that in those early days 'Gudrun' the historical name of Gibich's daughter, may have been preserved in some way—perhaps in a poem which has not come down to us—and that the northern poet, being acquainted with it, chose to give her the real name instead of the transferred one.

The tragedy of both history and legend lies in the circumstances attending the death of the hero. Brunhild is made use of in the plot to bring about Siegfried's death, yet the motive of jealousy and avarice on the part of his kinsmen is continually coming to the surface. Gudrun says: "He excelled all men, as gold does iron. . . . until my brothers begrudged me a husband who was more excellent than all. They could not sleep until they murdered him.[1] Almost these same words appear in the Edda.[2]

Fafni warns Sigurd that the treasure which he is about to take possession of will bring death to him;[3] Gunnar proposes to Hagen that they kill Sigurd and make disposition of all his treasure and property;[4] Hagen says to Gunther in speaking of Siegfried's hoard:

"Hey, solden wir den teilen noch in Buregonden lant!"[5]

Again he suggests to Gunther:

"Ob Sîvrit niht enlebte, sô würde iu undertân
vil der künege lande, der helt dô trûren began."[6]

1. Volsungasaga, 31.
2. Gudrúnarkvida, ll. 1-8.
3. Volsungasaga, 18.
4. Ibid, 30.
5. Nibelungenlied, Zarnke ed. p. 117,3.
6. Ibid, p. 132, 3.

Gunnar says to Hagen: "Now, wilt thow betray the king (Sigurd) for his wealth? It were sweet to own the hoard of the Rhine, and wield that wealth in happiness and sit and enjoy it in peace."[1]

Also the tenacity with which the Burgundians hold fast to the hoard, and Kriemhild's constant endeavor to obtain it, serve to deepen the impression already given, as to the part which greed for gold may have played in the murder of Siegfried. In the Dietrichsaga Grimhild asks Attila to invite her brothers to visit them, complaining at the same time that they will not give her a penny of Siegfried's treasure;[2] Grimhild thus greets Hagen, Sigfrid's murderer: "Have you brought me the hoard of the Nibelungs?"[3] When Hagen refuses to produce the hoard as long as any of the royal house are living, Kriemhild immediately has Gunther, the only survivor, beheaded. Then Hagen says:

"den hort den weiz nu nieman, wan got unde mîn.
der sol dich, vâlândinne, immer wol verholen sîn."[4]

Unfortunately, only one of the historians who write of Arminius has mentioned his death. But this one, Tacitus, tells us very plainly that "he fell by the treachery of his own kindred."[5] In a few terse sentences is outlined the situation which culminated in the death of Germany's liberator. The plot of Adgandestrius, the Chattian prince, to poison Arminius (p. 49), the evident jealousy of his relatives of the royal family who, like his

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1. Long Lay of Brunhild, Corp. Poet, p. 296.
2. Wilkinasaga, 334.
3. Ibid, 346.
4. Nibelunglied, Zarnke ed. 362, 2.
5. Tacitus, II, 88.

uncle Inguiomer, did not wish to recognize his authority or obey him, and thus resisted his claims to kingship,—all move along the same line of jealousy that has been observed in the Siegfried-legend.

While nothing is said of the motive of avarice on the part of Arminius' murderers, the fact that the saga has stressed this particular motive so heavily, would seem to indicate that it must have had some historical basis. We know, however, that since the Cheruscans won rich booty from the Varus victory, Arminius would probably have a no insignificant share of it. Perhaps in the Hildesheim treasure lies the sequel to the story of Arminius—the hoard which tempted some of his greedy relatives to take his life.

Gudrun says: "My life was better when I was with Sigurd; we slew kings and took possession of their property; we gave peace to those who wished it."[1] Siegfried said when dying:

"ich behielt iu lîp unt êre in angestlîcher nôt;"[2]

Would not the above words apply equally well to Arminius?

Among the prophetic utterances of Brynhild just before she mounts the funeral pyre is one to the effect that all the race of Sigurd is to perish;[3] Sigurd, when dying, says prophetically:

"der mortlîche tôt
mag iuch wol geriuwen her nâch dîsen tagen:
geloubt an rehten triuwen, das ir iuch selben habt erslagn."[4]

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1. Volsungasaga, 38.
2. Nibelungenlied, Zarnke ed. p. 150, 7.
3. Long Lay of Brunhild, Corp. Poet, p. 302.
4. Nibelungenlied, Zarnke ed. p. 151, 3.

How well these prophecies seem to find fulfillment in what Tacitus tells as to the fate of the royal family of the Cheruscans! "The same year (47 A.D.) the Cheruscan nation had recourse to Rome for a king; their domestic wars having swept away their nobles, and of the royal stock only one remaining, who resided in the city (Rome), named Italicus. He was the son of Flavus, the brother of Arminius."[1]

A glance at the comparative table (p.41a) shows that the later versions of the Siegfried-legend have really added very little to the motifs already appearing in the Seyfridslied, and that these later elements are largely mythical or fanciful. The fact that the first two, viz., Sigurd's descent from Odin and Brynhild's valkyrie nature, appear only in the northern saga, is due to the conditions under which the Scandinavian versions developed. The Eddic songs are the oldest, and probably had their origin in the Viking period; the lingual and metric forms indicate that they could not have been written earlier than the ninth century.[2] Since the northern Germanic nations were not Christianized until about the beginning of the eleventh century,[3] these early songs must necessarily reflect more or less of the old heathen mythology. Although the Volsungasaga was written considerably later (Ca. 1200) it, too, still shows traces of the earlier religion. Taking into account the fact that the Christian religion was forced upon the people of the north by their rulers and thus

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1. Tacitus, XI, 16.
2. "The Religion of the Teutons," de la Saussaye, 194 ff.
3. Ibid, 178 ff.

consisted largely at first of an outward compliance rather than of an inner acceptance, it is easy to understand how the old belief, so deeply interwoven with the whole life of the people, would linger on for a long time after the nation was considered nominally Christian.

Especially that phase of mythology, known as the heroic saga, would tend to persist the longest, since it has a human side. It seems to have been a characteristic element of mythology in general, that the great heroes should be descendants of the gods: Perseus, the hero of Argos, was the son of Jupiter, while his mother was the beautiful daughter of Acrisius; Hercules, the national hero of the Greeks, was also the son of Jupiter and had an earthly mother, Alcmene;[1] Siegfried, the great Germanic hero, descended from Odin. How such a hero-glorification could occur, is due partly to a natural tendency in human nature to idealize national heroes, and partly to the conception which the people had of the old heathen deities: they lived like men, and were endowed, especially in the Norse mythology, with many human qualities; but they were more powerful than men and invested with superhuman faculties.[2] The hero, then, who was superior to his fellows in power and achievement, would naturally be supposed to be akin to the gods.

In the valkyrie nature of Brynhild sounds the dying echo of a peculiar feature of the later Scandinavian mythology which is

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1. "Classic Myths," C. M. Gayley, 108-16.
2. "The Religion of the Teutons," de la Saussaye, 285.

an evident personification of fate, relating usually only to war. The valkyries were not, like the heroes, deified humans, but goddesses of war, who presided over the battlefield, chose the warriors who were to fall, and decided the victory.[1] Judging from some of the oldest Edda lays, Brynhild is at first no valkyrie, but the daughter of Budli. She says, in relating how her brother Attli insisted upon her marriage, threatening to deprive her of her inheritance if she refused:

"In great doubt I hesitated a long time,
Whether I should fight and cut down warriors,
Dressed in armor, in defiance of my brother."[2]

The Volsungasaga tells practically the same story;[3] Budli, when dying, says:

"Yet for Brynhild, the helmet is fitting,
A wish-maiden must she become."[4]

This tendency finds still fuller development in one of the Lost Lays of the Lacuna, where Sigfrid rides through the wall of flame and finds Brynhild with sword in hand, clad in helmet and coat-of-mail. She says that she has been in battle with the King of Gothland, her weapons are dyed with men's blood, and she yearns after that kind of a life; if he wishes her, he must be the best of men and slay those who have sought her in marriage.[5] In the Western Wolsung Lay Brynhild has become a fully-developed valkyrie; she

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1. "The Religion of the Teutons," de la Saussaye, 304 ff.
2. Sigurdarkvida en skamma, 38.
3. Volsungasaga, 29.
4. Oddrúnargrátr, 15.
5. "The Wooing of Sigfrid," Corp. Poet, 313-14.

has been punished by Odin for disobedience in "bringing low in battle others than those he wished to fall."[1] The same story with variations is found in the Volsungasaga.[2] Thus the motif grew in the northern saga; but in the Dietrichsaga[3] and Nibelungenlied no vestige remains of this supernatural element except in the superior strength displayed by Brunhild in her mastery of Gunther[4] and in the contests of strength described in the Nibelungenlied.[5] The character of Brunhild is very plastic; she seems to have no historical connection, but is rather a creation of the poet's fancy, made to assist in carrying out the plot, and thus adjusts herself to meet the need: (1) she serves to give Attila a motive for causing the destruction of the Burgundians; (2) she brings about Siegfried's death. Later, when it is Kriemhild who seeks the death of the Burgundians, in order to avenge Siegfried's fate, and Siegfried's wooing of Brunhild is omitted, the latter takes a place secondary in importance to that of her rival, and simply drops out after she has performed her part in connection with Siegfried's death.

The fanciful element which appears in the northern saga consists in Siegfried's ability to understand the birds, and to change forms with Gunther; his wonderful steed Grani; his magic sword Gram, or Balmung; his horny hide; his 'tarnhut;' and the wall of flame which encircled Brynhild. All of these betray a

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1. Corp. Poet, 158.
2. Volsungasaga, 20.
3. Wilkinasaga, 206.
4. Nibelungenlied, Zarnke ed. 69, 2.
5. Ibid, 96, 4 ff.

love of the marvelous, the wonderful, the supernatural—a tendency to use fanciful embellishments—which is especially characteristic of the northern literature. To be sure, the German versions are not entirely free from them, but they have receded farther into the background. The story of Siegfried and his encounter with the dragon, as well as that of his winning the treasure, is not given as a prominent motif, but narrated by Hagen, in order to identify the hero; the fact that Siegfried has a horny hide is learned only when Kriemhild informs Hagen, so that he may protect the vulnerable spot. The Nibelungenlied is the literary product of a people who were interested in the pursuits of chivalry. While the subject matter with which the poem deals does not belong to a chivalrous age, the poet has enveloped it in the atmosphere of the times. Richly dressed knights and ladies, gayly caparisoned horses, magnificent feasts, knightly contests of skill and strength——these were preferred to stories of dragons and treasure, gods and valkyries.

Conclusion

It has been the purpose of this paper to construct a theory which, excluding the fantastic and improbable, should follow only the lines of research justified by a comparison of the leading motifs in saga with the facts of history. In presenting the theory that the dragon of legend might represent the political power of Rome in Germany, or still more generally, a heroic exploit, there has been no attempt to follow in the footsteps of

earlier investigators and interpret every detail of the legendary account as being symbolical. To do so would be to ignore the nature of the saga and its manner of growth. No poet of the Germanic tribes set for himself the task of reproducing faithfully in the dragon-story of Siegfried every feature of the great dead of Arminius; the legend did not leave the hand of any single person as a finished work. For centuries it passed from mouth to mouth, from place to place, receiving an added touch here, losing something there—always subject to the whim of its transmitter. Thus, names of persons and places changed, causing an endless amount of confusion later on, as in the case of Sigmund, concerning the name of whose kingdom no two sagas agree. Subject to the influence of different ages and peoples, the saga mirrored faithfully the beliefs, the fancies, the interests of each; so the mythical fanciful element of the north had to give way to the Christian, chivalrous tone of the Nibelungenlied.

Furthermore, the combination of the two originally separate stories has caused still greater confusion: characters have evidently been created to bridge over the difficulties incurred by this union. Thus we see Brunhild a prominent figure in the northern saga; but when later other motifs entered and made her less necessary, she became secondary in importance and disappeared quietly, after having caused the death of Siegfried. The character of Kriemhild is enigmatical: only in name does she seem to resemble Thusnelda. She, too, must be more or less of an invention, to bind the sagas together and assist in carrying out

the plot. As Brunhild recedes into the background, Kriemhild comes to the front and becomes chief among the women characters of the Nibelungenlied.

But the features which have remained steadfast through all the changes must be an echo of history, must be the vital element which no whim or fancy of the poet could set aside. They loomed up so mighty and powerful, that by the very force of their personality they demanded recognition. So Siegfried, the center around which everything else revolves, and to whose glory all must contribute, remains the same matchless hero. That he must be a character whose counterpart is to be found in history seems incontestible. This being true, he finds his prototype in Arminius: both are of noble birth; the names of their kinsmen have the same characteristic syllable; in personality they are strikingly alike; Arminius' great, patriotic act is expressively symbolized in the dragon-fight of Siegfried; in the Hildesheim discovery is doubtless the treasure—the war booty from the "Varusschlacht;" since there seems to be a certain blending of Thusnelda with Gibich's daughter, it does not seem illogical to see in the rescue of the latter from the dragon a symbol of the abduction of the former; both heroes are the victim of jealousy and greed on the part of their kinsmen. Surely it can be said of Arminius as well as of Siegfried: "He towered above all men in stature, nobility, and manly beauty, in nearly all old sagas where the strongest, and most celebrated, as well as mildest heroes and princes are mentioned: and his name goes in all tongues from the north to the

Greek Sea, and so will it endure, as long as the world stands."[1]

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1. Wilkinasaga, Chap. 166.

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